(b) how much of the quantity was found inferior;

(c) whether the cargo was inspected before loading and if so, by whom; and

(d) what steps have been taken to meet the losses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUBANS PRASAD SINGH): (a) The details of wheat imported during 1997 are as under:—

Country	Qty. (Lakh MT)	Value (Rs. (C&F) crores, prov.)
Australia	13.90	856
Canada	2.66	179
Argentina	0.95	59
	17.51	1094

The entire contracted quantity of 17.51 lakh MT has arrived at Indian Ports by May, 1997.

(b) The imported wheat conforms to the quality requirements under Preven tion of Food Adulteration Act and is fit for human consumption. However, the damaged grains content in the wheat imported from Argentina is slightly above the contractual specifications.

(c) In the case of Australian and Cana dian shipments, the cargo was inspected and certified by the respective Govern ment agencies. In case of Argentina, quality inspection was carried out by Internationally recognised Quality Sur veyors.

(d) No losses have been reported so far.

Tribal Villages Covered by PDS In Karnataka

487. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether all the villages inhabited by tribals in Karnataka have been covered by Public Distribution System (PDS) as on 30th June, 1997;

(b) if r.ot, the number of villages which are without this facility; and

(c) the time by when these will be covered;

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUBANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Public Distribution System (PDS) is implemented under the joint responsibility of the Central Government and the State Governments/ UT Administrations. Central Government procures and distributes the essential commodities in bulk to States/UTs. State Governments are responsible for implementing the PDS. Government of Karnataka have informed that families Below Poverty Line (BPL) have been identified in the State including tribal areas and necessary arrangements have been made for implementing the Targeted PDS in the State w.e.f. 1st June, 1997.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Rice Procurement Target and Liberalisation of Rice Imports

488. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in 1996-97 rice procurement target is not likely to be met and Government have decided to liberalise rice imports;

(b) if so, the extent to which rice procurement is likely to fall short of 1996-97 target and the reasons for decline in the rice production;

(c) the estimated quantity of rice to be imported; and

(d) what is the likely impact on the domestic price of commodity?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUM-" ER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUBANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (d) The procurement of paddy under price support scheme is totally voluntary in nature, as only the paddy offered by the farmers can be procured: Similarly, the collection of rice under levy scheme also depends on the purchase of paddy made by the..